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HOG ISLAND AND SHUTE'S FOLLY

BY HENRY A. M. SMITH

HOG ISLAND: A VANISHED ISLAND IN CHARLESTON HARBOUR

Opposite the present City of Charleston on the Eastern or North-eastern side of the Cooper river, is a body of salt marsh land now commonly known as Hog Island. It is bounded on the West by the Cooper river, on the South by the creek, or rather connecting passage, called Hog Island creek, or Hog Island Channel, on the East by the open bay in front of the Town of Mt. Pleasant and on the North by a small creek or passage separating it from the mainland. This last creek is unnamed on the U. S. Coast survey map: but in the early deeds is called "Hog Island Creek;" and the passage to the South, now called Hog Island creek, in the early deeds is called "Sulivants" creek, possibly after Captain Florentia O'Sullivan after whom Sullivan's Island was named and who was the grantee of a large tract of land on the mainland adjacent

On 12 Sept^r. 1694 a grant was made to Edmund Bellinger (subsequently created a Landgrave) of a tract of seventeen acres on the East side of Cooper River over against Charles Town commonly known by the name of "Hogg Island" bounding North on Hogg Island creek, South on Sulivants creek, and East and West upon a marsh.¹ As a subsequent map shows, this seventeen acres, of

¹ *Proprietary Grants*, vol. 38, p. 151. *Offic. Hist. Commⁿ, Memo: Bk. 1, p. 401.*

evidently highland, was situated near the Eastern edge of the marsh toward the mouth of Shem (originally under its Indian name Shem-ee) creek. On 23 March 1708 this seventeen acres was conveyed by Elizabeth Bellinger "Widow and Relict of said Edmund Bellinger" to Alexander Parris.² The deed of feoffment includes in the description "the houses &c &c thereon." This may be only a part of the general wording of such a deed; still there may at that time have been houses on the Island.

This deed also resolves a query put by the present writer in the article on the Ashpoo Barony published in a former number of this *Magazine*³ as to whether the first Landgrave Bellinger's widow was named Elizabeth. It is evident she was. She may have been a second wife, and not the mother of his surviving children or all of them, as a traditionary account given by Dr. J. G. Bulloch, in a pamphlet published by him, gives the name of Landgrave Bellinger's wife, the mother of his children as Sarah Cartwright. Of this the writer has found no evidence on the record, and as after the Landgrave's death Elizabeth Bellinger seems to have been appointed to administer on his estate, none of his sons could well have been then old enough to do so.⁴

On 23 January 1724 Alexander Parris and Mary his wife conveyed the property to William Gibbon and Jonah Collins in trust for Alexander's wife Mary Parris who on 4th of March 1730 joined with her husband and her Trustee Jonah Collins in conveying it to John Gascoigne Captain of His Majesty's "Shipp of Warr" named the Alborough.⁵

In the possession of Captain Gascoigne the name of Hog Island was dropped and the property was named "Mount Edgecombe."

In February 1733/34 he advertised the property for sale or lease viz:

"TO BE LET OR SOLD AN ISLAND OPPOSITE TO CHARLES TOWN commonly Called Hog-Island being a very commodious Situation for a carining wharf and for a Ferry. The Creeks round it affording perfect security for Boats and Periaguas in the most stormy Weather: as the Main-Creeks doth for Ships of the greatest

² *M. C. O. Charleston*, Bk. I, p. 215.

³ *S. C. Hist. & Gen. Mag.*, vol. XV, p. 66.

⁴ *Prob. Ct. Charleston Bk.*, 1716-1721, p. 140.

⁵ *M. C. O. Charleston*, Bk. I, p. 215.

“Draught: and they abound with such a continual plenty of Fish, that the Town may be constantly serv’d from thence. On the Island is a New Dwelling House &c. built on the high Bluff, which commands an entire prospect of the Harbour, from the Barr to the Town. A delightful Wilderness with shady Walks and Arbours, cool in the hottest Seasons. A piece of Garden-ground where all the best kinds of Fruit and Kitchen Greens are produced, and planted with Orange, Apple, Peach, Nectarine and Plumb trees capable of being made a very good Vineyard and of other great Improvements, and subject to the Quit-Rent of an Ear of Indian Corn. Enquire of Capt. Gascoigne in Charles Town.”⁶

The advertisement procured a purchaser for on 27 March 1734 Capt: Gascoigne conveyed to James Searles of Charles Town “victualer” all the seventeen acres “heretofore known by the name of Hog Island and since by the name of Mount Edgecombe”⁷

From and since James Searles the writer has not traced the title.

On the map of Charleston Harbour made by the British at the siege in May 1780, the body of marsh appears as extending a good deal farther East towards Mount Pleasant than it now does.⁸ There is on the map an island or knoll of high land in the marsh near the Eastern edge which is apparently the seventeen acre tract as it is designated Hog Island.

It has now completely disappeared. The whole marsh has retroceded Westward from the Eastern line of the marsh as it stood on the map of 1780 and the only evidence of any remains of the knoll of high land is a bank of old oyster shells having an area of but a few yards above ordinary high water mark.

This is all left (if it be left therefrom) of the “high Bluff” mentioned in the advertisement. The writer has been told by a resident of Mt. Pleasant that a good many years ago—say 50 years—the space above high water was somewhat larger but that it has greatly diminished even in that period.

The island has undoubtedly disappeared before the ravages of the cyclones and hurricanes since 1780. Its position left it open to the onslaught of the waves from the open bay to the Southeast and once the trees and growth on the knoll were destroyed the

⁶ *So. Ca. Gazette*, Saturday, February 9 to Saturday, February 16, 1733/34.

⁷ *M. C. O. Charleston*, Bk. M, p. 22.

⁸ *Charleston Year Book for 1882*, p. 361.

light sandy soil, which no doubt formed its surface, offered no substantial opposition to the ravages of the waters.

It is only one of many instances of this destruction along the coast.

The site of the original Fort Johnson on James Island opposite to Hog Island has been washed away and is now under water at low tide.⁹

Battery Wagner on Morris Island, the scene of fierce conflict in 1862, 1863, is now many yards at sea. On Coles Island on the Southern edge of James Island the old tabby fort built in 1812 which fifty years ago was far from the water line is now daily threatened by the tide and fast disappearing.

Bird Key, a small island off Stono inlet which seventy years ago had high sand hills upon it, is now a mere sand bank only a few inches above ordinary high tide. More striking as an illustration than all others is the site of the village of Edingsville on the Ocean edge of Edisto Island, which has been entirely swept away and is now in the ocean.

The coast survey records, and geological observations, show that the coast along the South Atlantic States is sinking several inches in the century. In consequence of that depression and the ravages of storms the coast line is slowly retroceding.

While due to the shifting nature of the sand forming the surface of our sea front, when it is washed away in one place, it "makes" in another, yet where what is washed away is soil several feet above high water, what is "made" is only a bank, or shoal, that never increases to more than a few inches above ordinary high tide. And what is once washed away is never (so far as the writer had observed) again returned.

And such has been the fate of Mount Edgecombe. The ravages of the storms of September 1804, August 1813 and September 1822 as described would account for the destruction of everything on such an exposed and unprotected knoll as Hog Island. In 1804 "Fort Johnson was so injured as not to admit the mounting of a single cannon. The breastwork and palisades of Fort Pinckney "were washed away."¹⁰ Fort Pinckney was the fortification on

⁹ *Charleston Year Book for 1883*, p. 475.

¹⁰ Ramsay, *Hist. of So. Ca.*, vol. 2, p. 330.

Shute's Folly island afterwards known as Castle Pinckney: and its protective bulwarks against the attacks of storms, were no doubt much more capable of effective resistance than the light soil of Hog Island. Yet the hurricane of 1804 left Fort Pinckney a ruin.¹¹

SHUTE'S FOLLY ISLAND, AND SOME EARLY QUAKERS. WHY FOLLY?

On 5 August 1711 a grant was made to Col Alexander Parris the then owner of "Hog Island" of 224 acres of Marsh land bounding East and South on Ashley River West on Cooper river and North on Hog Island creek.¹² Col Parris by his will dated 6 February 1735 devised this 224 acres with other property to his son John Parris who survived his father and by his Will dated 1 August 1736 devised it with other property to his son John Alexander Parris with a provision, that in case of his son's death before 18 years of age the property should go to his nephew also named John Alexander Parris.¹³ The son did die before reaching eighteen and the nephew inherited and on 28 May 1746 sold the property to Joseph Shute.¹⁴ On 9 May 1747 Joseph Shute conveyed to John Mackenzie an undivided one half interest in the 224 acres,¹⁵ and on 9 April 1763 one John Shute conveyed to George Murray an undivided one half interest in the same 224 acres stating that this one half interest had been conveyed to him on 20 May 1752 by William Wragg.¹⁶

It was on a bank on the Southern extremity of this grant of 244 acres that in 1797 was constructed the fortification named Fort Pinckney¹⁷ and which later was locally called Castle Pinckney. In later years—sometime since 1890—the brick walls and casemates of the old fort were taken down and the site of the fort used as a depot by the Light House Department of the United States. To the writer it has been a matter of fruitless speculation as to why this marsh Island was called Shute's "Folly;" Of what "folly" in

¹¹ *Charleston Year Book for 1883*, p. 481.

¹² *Proprietary Grants*, vol. 39, p. 110.

¹³ *M. C. O. Charleston*, Bk. C. C., p. 437.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk. F. F., p. 191.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Bk. Z. Z., p. 603.

¹⁷ *Charleston Year Book for 1883*, p. 481.

the opinion of his contemporaries was Shute guilty in his use of this marsh tract of 224 acres? It is now a low expanse of tidal marsh land, the whole surface of which with the exception of the site of old Fort Pinckney is submerged at high tides. The marsh sedge growth alone showing above the water at high tides. The Western edge of this marsh island directly opposite the City has on it a hard front of sand and oyster shells locally called a "hard"—i.e. a place whereon vessels of no great size could be careened at low tide, and then have their sides and bottoms repaired, recalked, or scraped and painted as the occasion required.

Joseph Shute was a quaker, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Shute of Philadelphia and a person apparently of means in Charles Town South Carolina. He married in Charles Town in 1731 Anna Arnott a daughter of Isabel Kimberly, and stepdaughter of her husband Thomas Kimberly.¹⁸ Anna Arnott was a widow, and a daughter of Isabel Kimberly by a previous marriage to Christian Goll, mariner. Thomas Kimberly was likewise a quaker and on 17 February 1731 conveyed to John Whitla, Joseph Shute and Thomas Fleming the lot of land in Charles Town containing 1 Rood 29 perches commonly called the "Quaker Lott" granted to Kimberly 3 March 1731 to be held by the grantees for the use of that sort of people commonly called Quakers.¹⁹

This lot appears to be the lot on the East side of King Street a few doors South of Queen where the Quaker Meeting House formerly stood and where two gravestones over former members of the congregation still remain. As interesting memoranda concerning Joseph Shute and the other Quakers of the time in Charles Town, there is appended below some extracts from the minutes of the Quaker Congregation in Charles Town. These minutes are still extant in the possession of the Quakers of Philadelphia.

Touching the appellation of Shute's "Folly," it has been suggested by an assiduous inquirer in early South Carolina Records that the word "folly" was sometimes used locally to denote a piece of low ground. If so, the writer can only say that he has never himself come across the word used in that connection. Dr. Murray's new English Dictionary mentions no such meaning, but it does say that it is "a popular name for any costly structure con-

¹⁸ *M. C. O.*, Bk. I, p. 535.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 663.

sidered to have shown folly in the builder." There is a Folly Island, which is situate South of Morris Island between the main body of James Island and the sea. That however appears to be the corruption of the name "Follee" which seems from some early grants to have been the Indian name for that Island.

Was the "folly" that of Joseph Shute or of John Shute?

In the appended minutes of Joseph Shute's second marriage it is related that "tho' educated in the Profession of Truth, yet not 'regarding the wholesome discipline of his Friends was married to 'y^e said Mary by a Priest."

Was that his folly? and if so why was his marsh land made to bear the stigma?

MINUTES OF THE QUAKERS IN CHARLESTOWN, S. C.

A RECORD OF JOS. SHUTE AND HIS WIVES

CERTIFICATE

WHEREAS Jos. Shute of the City of Philadelphia Merchant Son of Thos. and Elizabeth Shute of the same place and Anna Arnott of Charlers-Town in S^c Carolina Widdow Declared their Intentions of taking each other in Marriage at two select Meetings of the People called Quakers according to the good Order used among them whose proceedings therein after a deliberate Consideration there of were Allowed by the said Meetings, They both Appearing clear of all others and having consent of Parents and Relations concerned Now these are to Certifie whom it may concern that for the full accomplishing their said Intentions this Seventh Day Of the eighth month in the year 1731 the said Joseph Shute & Anna Arnott appeared at a publick Assembly of the sd People at their Meeting House in Charles-Town Aforesd He the sd Jos. Shutt taking the said Anna Arnott by the Hand did Openly declare as followeth (viz) Friends: In the Fear of the Lord and in the presence of this Assembly whom I desire to be my witnesses I take this my Friend Anna Arnott to be my wife promising with the Lords Assistance to be unto her a Loving and faithfull Husband til Death shall Separate us (Or words to that effect) And then and there in the sd Assembly the sd Anna Arnott did openly declare as followeth viz Frds In the Fear of the Lord and in the presence of this Assembly Whom I desire to be my witnesses, I take this my frd Jos. Shute to be my Husband promising with ye Lord's Assistance to be unto him a loving and faithful Wife til Death shall separate us (Or words to that Effect) And then and there in the sd Assembly the sd Jos. Shute & Anna, She according to the custom of marriage assuming the name of her husband as a further confirmation thereof unto these Presents did set their hands And we whose names are underwritten being present among others at the

Solemnization of sd Marriage & Subscription as witnesses thereunto have also to these presents subscribed our Names the Day & Year above written.

Thos. Elliott	Rich ^d Wigg	Jos. Shute
Thos. Fleming	Christopher Hill	Anna Shute
Jno. Witter	Stephen Beauchamp	
Susanna Wiggington	Jno. Smith	
Mary Smith	Thos. Beadon	
Jno. Daniel	Mich. Higgins	
Mary Blamyre		
Mary Dandridge		
Martha Booth		
Mary Blamyre Jun.		
Andw. Deane		Thos. Kimberly
Wm. Howell		Isabell Kimberly
Sam ^l . Witter		Thos. Whitmarsh
Jno. Blaymer		
Othn ^l Beale		
Thos. Cooper		
Robt Booth		

A Record of Joseph Shute and his wife being married on the twelfth Day of the twelfth Month One Thousand Seven Hundred & Fifty

Joseph Shute married to Mary — widdow of Stono

The said Joseph tho' educated in the Profession of Truth, yet not regarding the wholesome discipline of his Friends was married to ye said Mary by a Priest.

* * * * *

Anna Shute wife of Jos Shute Dyed the 26th Day of the 4 Month 1749 and was Entred the Next Day in the Friends bureing Ground Aged forty years and six month.

* * * * *

Anna Goll daughter of Christian Goll mariner and Isabella his wife was born on the 26th of ye 10th Mo. (called december) 1708.

* * * * *

Thos Kimberly & Isabella Goll; took Each Other in Marriage, att the publique Meeting house of the people Called Quakers, In Charlestown. [No date given.]